

WOLFE, J.C.

DRAWER 19A

Artists-W

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Artists of Abraham Lincoln portraits

J.C. Wolfe

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

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LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor.
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, of Fort Wayne, Indiana.

No. 313

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

April 8, 1935

SIX PORTRAITS OF LINCOLN FROM LIFE

The death of Douglas Volk, which occurred at Eyreburg, Maine, on February seventh, removed from the fraternity of portrait painters one of America's best-known artists. Some of his outstanding works were his studies of Abraham Lincoln. He was but two years of age when his father, Leonard Volk, made the famous life mask of Lincoln. From his very earliest days the son of the famous sculptor had been a great admirer of the Emancipator. Although named for Stephen A. Douglas to whom his father was related, Douglas Volk has produced during the past few years some fine interpretations of the little giant's most formidable opponent. At the time of his death he was at work on still another study of Lincoln. As a memorial to his efforts, this issue of Lincoln Lore presents the story of Lincoln's first portraits made from life.

It is said that more than twenty artists went to Springfield, Illinois, to study Lincoln after he was nominated for the presidency. These early portraits from life, which have been made available through various reproduction processes, contribute something definite to our understanding of Lincoln's personal appearance. One-half dozen of them which have been recognized as outstanding among the beardless Lincolns are mentioned here.

Thomas Hicks

One of the earliest, if not the first portrait made of Lincoln from life, was done by Thomas Hicks who was in Springfield working on a Lincoln picture as early as June 12, 1860. Inasmuch as he completed the picture on June 13, it is quite likely he had been working several days on it. On June 14 Lincoln gave Hicks a short autobiographical sketch.

Upon the completion of the painting Mrs. Lincoln is said to have remarked:

"Yes, that is Mr. Lincoln. It is exactly like him and his friends in New York will see him as he looks here at home."

A lithograph by Grozelier produced from the Hicks painting was published by W. Schaus. It makes Lincoln look very young, at least ten years younger than any other reproduction. It might be designated as "The Youthful Lincoln."

Charles A. Barry

A group of Boston citizens including the governor of the state selected Charles A. Barry, a local artist of note, to go to Springfield and make a portrait of the Republican nominee for the presidency. He arrived in Springfield on the last Saturday in June, 1860, and presented his letter of introduction from Governor Banks.

After reading the letter of introduction Lincoln said, "They want my head do they? Well, if you can get it you may have it; that is, if you are able to take it off while I am on the jump."

Barry produced a crayon drawing which was put on stone by J. E. Baker and lithographed by J. H. Bufford. It has been designated by some Lincoln students as "The Greek God."

Thomas M. Johnson

Another Boston man, Thomas M. Johnson, was sent to Springfield in July, 1860, by C. H. Brainard, a lithographer, to do a portrait of Lincoln. He arrived on July 19 and started to work the next morning. He was a member of a large family of artists, his father, mother, brother, and sisters all being gifted in art.

Johnson wrote several letters to his father about the appearance of Lincoln, commenting that he considered his face and head "beautiful in the extreme when compared with all the pictures that have been published over his name."

While his portrait was made from life, he depended much on an actual photograph of Lincoln for outline

work, using one that Lincoln sat for about that time. The photograph is usually credited to the year 1858 and has become known as Meserve number 9, although it appears as if it was made in 1860. Johnson's painting closely resembles the photograph Lincoln is said to have presented to Harriet Chapman.

Alban J. Conant

Out of the west came another artist to study Lincoln, commissioned by William McPherson of St. Louis. He arrived in Springfield in the Fall of 1860, about two months before the election, and was greatly surprised at the personal appearance of Lincoln, after what he had read about him in the press. He said:

"My first sight of him was a revelation. This beaming expression of the man who stood transfigured before me was one I was resolved to do my best to transfer to canvass."

When he was finished, like most of the other artists, he was anxious to get Mrs. Lincoln's reaction. She said, "Oh! that is excellent, excellent. It's the best likeness of him ever taken. He looks there as he does when his friends are about him."

The Conant portrait was sold to the A. Smith Cochran Historical Collection in 1911. The original study shows Lincoln in a pleasant mood, and the painting is usually designated as "The Smiling Lincoln."

Henry J. Brown

The artists who were commissioned to do Lincoln from life kept busily at work right through the summer months. On August 13, Henry J. Brown was in Springfield working on a miniature for Judge John M. Read of Philadelphia.

On August 20, 1860, John G. Nicolay, one of Mr. Lincoln's secretaries, wrote a letter to a friend in which he mentioned the work done by Brown. He said in part:

"Did you ever see a real pretty miniature? . . . A regular miniature painted on ivory? Well, a Philadelphia artist has just been painting one of Mr. Lincoln which is both very pretty and very truthful, decidedly the best picture of him I have ever seen . . . I had a long talk with the artist today. He says that the impression prevails East that Mr. Lincoln is very ugly. He was very happy when on seeing him he found that he was not at all such a man as had been represented . . . He will go back home as agreeably disappointed in Mr. Lincoln's manners, refinement, and general characteristics as in his personal appearance."

Mr. Lincoln sat for two ambrotypes for Brown to assist him in his work, and the influence of these photographs is recognized in the production. The original miniature was last known to have been in the possession of Robert Lincoln.

George Frederick Wright

The dates on which Wright did his study of Lincoln cannot be determined definitely. Some accounts claim it was made after Lincoln was elected to the presidency, but, if that be true, the artist failed to take account of the beard which Lincoln was growing.

Wright was from Hartford, Connecticut, and is said to have been in Springfield on another commission when he found an opportunity to do a portrait of Lincoln. It is a very satisfactory study, portraying Lincoln as a melancholy man and contributing certain features not to be found in other paintings.

Just what became of this picture after it was finished it is rather difficult to confirm as there are two or three traditions with respect to it. One claims it was presented to Lincoln by William Butler; another states that it was the only painting of himself that Lincoln ever purchased. It was exhibited in the Illinois Host Building at Chicago during the Century of Progress Exposition in 1933 and is now in possession of the University of Chicago.

2.

KANSAS
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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September 29, 1942

Dr. Louis A. Warren, editor
Lincoln national life foundation
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Dear Dr. Warren:

The following item appeared in The Daily Capital, Topeka,
Kansas, February 2, 1881:

Prof. Wolfe is an artist whose works have been judged by many eminent men who are familiar with the best galleries in this country, and his pictures have been exhibited and thoroughly compared with the works of many of the most eminent portrait artists of the United States during the past 5 years. As long ago as 1860 Prof. Wolfe painted a portrait from sittings of the honored Abraham Lincoln, and a testimonial signed by O.M. Hatch, the secretary of state, Dubois, Ben Butler and other state officers, and endorsed by Lincoln himself, to the effect that it was the most truthful likeness of Mr. Lincoln they had ever seen was given to the Professor, and after Mr. Lincoln's death Prof. Wolfe received and filled thirty orders for copies of the portrait from the dead president's friends.

Our file of your publication "Lincoln lore" may not be complete but I have gone through what we have and have found no reference to a portrait of Lincoln by J. C. Wolfe. Have you any information in your files which would identify either the artist or the portrait.

There are two portraits in Topeka painted by Wolfe. Both are unsigned.

Yours very truly,

Alberta Pantle

Alberta Pantle, cataloger.



Artist:
Wolfe, J. C.

October 1, 1942

Mr. F. C. Bentley
1220 Washington Avenue
Springfield, Missouri

My dear Mr. Bentley:

Thank you very much for the clipping from the Kansas City Star which reached me at the same time a letter from the Kansas State Historical Society which made some inquiries about the artist, J. C. Wolfe. While our files do not show any definite studies of Lincoln which he made I think quite sure he was one of the many portrait artists who went to Springfield in 1860 to make life studies of Abraham Lincoln.

Thank you indeed for your clipping.

Very truly yours,

LAW:JT
L.A. Warren

Jellyman, C.
Ralph H. H. H.
1/28/93

Wolfe painted pictures
for Bannum Museum

J. C. Wolfe

Artist also did some
paintings of the President
where are they?
11/10/43

October 1, 1942

Alberta Pantle
Kansas State Historical Society
Topeka, Kansas

My dear Madam:

In the same mail that brought your letter inquiry about J. C. Wolfe, I received a copy of the Kansas City Star for last Sunday which undoubtedly is the source of your inquiry.

I think without doubt that Wolfe was one of the many painters who went to Springfield in 1860 and made a life study of the nominee. Tradition has it that at one time there were as many as twenty artist made portraits of him during the summer of 1860.

The fact that he did not sign his paintings I think is about *responsible for the obscurity of his work* although it does seem as if the fact that he made so many copies of the Lincolns would at least allow it to be identified.

On three different instances we have had offers to buy paintings out west and all of them seem to be about the same likeness by description and we are fortunate in having a photograph of one of them. We are writing this party again to see if we can find any further information about it.

My thought is that the Wolfe painting showed Lincoln with almost a front view, a very full bust study and, of course, showing him without a beard.

We will attempt to find further information about Mr. Wolfe and advise you as soon as anything of interest is gathered.

Very truly yours,

LAW:JT
L.A. Warren

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A RARE JOHN BROWN PORTRAIT

Picture in Governor's Office in Topeka Statehouse May Have Been Painted From Life—For Years the Name of the Artist and How It Came Into State's Possession Have Been Unknown.

By CECIL HOWES.

TOPEKA, KAS., Sept. 26.—Kansas may be in possession of one of the few existing portraits from the life of John Brown. The commonwealth never paid a dime for it and may owe somebody a bit of money. The state has had possession of the picture more than sixty years. No claim for it or for the money has been made since 1898, so the statute of limitations long ago has run against the debt, so far as the purely legal aspects are concerned.

For nearly fifty years the picture of John Brown has hung in the private office of the governors of Kansas. None seemed to care much about it except to indicate a casual approval and when visitors remarked about it to say, "Yes, it seems to be an excellent painting."

When Gov. Payne Ratner came into office and the throngs of school boys and girls came in on their annual school pilgrimages, the executive built up for himself a little lecture about the office. He pointed out the pioneer mural painted by George M. Stone of Topeka and the allegorical painting by the same artist on the wall of the governor's reception room. Also he pointed out the John Brown portrait and the oil painting of Gov. Samuel J. Crawford, the only governor Kansas has had who resigned his office. Governor Crawford resigned to become commander of a newly organized Kansas regiment authorized to aid the government in the first winter campaign ever conducted against the marauding Indians of the Mid-West.

Governor Ratner discussed all these pictures briefly, telling something about the characters involved and for nearly four years he has inquired of old timers about the history of the John Brown portrait, but none knew who painted it, where it came from or how it got to the governor's office. The governor kept chiding the newspapermen for their lack of knowledge of its origin. Last winter one of them started a search and for six months has been digging into the records. He has had the help of the Kansas Historical society, the state library and some officials of art galleries in New York and Boston.

X-Ray Gave No Help.

An examination of the portrait disclosed there was no signature or mark to show when it was painted. There was nothing to indicate when or how it came into the possession of the state or how it happened to be in the office of the governor.

L. D. Robinson, statehouse custodian, and specialists of the State Board of Health then took the picture out of its frame and put it under the X-ray machine which the state owns. That revealed no more on the microscopes which had

been used in a search for the name of the painter. But the X-ray did reveal that the painting was excellently done by a painter who knew how to handle a brush and had made proper preparation of his canvas before he began his work.

Then it was presumed the picture probably was a copy of some portrait of the abolitionist leader, so the search to find the original began and that did not produce results. No portrait of John Brown was found of which the one in the governor's office was a copy. There were some steel engravings of a similar pose but none exactly like the Kansas picture.

Learn Name of Artist.

But in the course of the search, a Chicago paper was found with a cut of this picture and the caption: "The Wolfe Portrait of John Brown in the Kansas Historical Society Collection."

Further search of the society records disclosed a photograph of the portrait, sent to this paper by George W. Martin, then secretary of the society, and which was returned with the thanks of the publisher.

Then a search was instituted of the society's letter files and thousands of letters and the copies of the replies were checked over and finally one was found, addressed to Mrs. J. C. Wolfe, Second and Washington streets, Kansas City, Kansas, by the late Franklin G. Adams, one of the founders and at that time secretary of the society. Mrs. Wolfe had written Governor Leedy asking what had become of the portrait of John Brown painted by her late husband and expressing a desire that it be returned to her. Mr. Adams wrote that the picture had been left by the artist with the society for safe-keeping and that it would be returned to her when she furnished instructions as to the packing and shipment.

The records failed to reveal that the painting was ever packed or shipped.

Who was J. C. Wolfe and how did the picture come into the possession of the state or the historical society? There was not a single word in the society records beyond those two letters that revealed anything about the artist or his work. No trace of Mrs. Wolfe after her residence at Second and Wyandotte streets in Kansas City, Kansas, could be uncovered.

Lent by Historical Society.

George Root, archivist for the society and the oldest employee of the state of Kansas in point of service, finally came up with a faint recollection of how the portrait got into the governor's office.

"I have only a hazy memory of the incident," he said. "But just after the present quarters of the governor were completed, someone from that office came up to our offices (the society then occupied part of the fifth floor of the statehouse) and said that the walls of the governor's office were so rare

that the governor complained about it and wondered if we didn't have some pictures to hang there. I believe we agreed to send him the two largest oil paintings the society then owned, the portraits of Governor Crawford and John Brown."

How the picture got into the historical collections Root did not know. It was in the collection when he went to work for the society, more than fifty years ago.

That seemed to dispose of the question of how the picture happened to be in the governor's office but disclosed nothing as to the artist or how the portrait came into the possession of the society except that it had been left with the society for safe-keeping.

Offered to State in 1881.

Then an accident happened. One of the researchers in the society was checking through the legislative journals of the session of 1881 and found in the index the notation: "Old John Brown Resolution."

On page 525 of the House Journal of the Legislature of 1881 appeared this resolution, offered by James D. Snoddy of La Cygne, Linn County, one of the active participants in territorial affairs and the formative days of the state and then a member of the Legislature:

Resolved by the House, the Senate concurring, that the joint committee on ways and means be instructed to insert in the miscellaneous appropriation bill the sum of \$2,000 for the purchase of the portrait of John Brown and the portrait of ex-Gov. A. H. Reeder as he appeared when he escaped from the Territory



HOW THIS PORTRAIT OF JOHN BROWN CAME INTO THE POSSESSION OF THE STATE OF KANSAS HAS BEEN A MYSTERY FOR YEARS. IT HANGS IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE IN THE TOPEKA CAPITOL. IN THIS ARTICLE CECIL HOWES BRINGS FORTH RECORDS AND CLUES CONCERNING THE IDENTITY OF THE PAINTER.

in disguise: Provided, the price to be paid for the portrait of John Brown shall not be more than \$500, and the portrait of Gov. A. H. Reeder shall not be more than \$1,500.

A substitute was offered for the resolution, which follows:

Resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring therein, That a committee of five, consisting of three members of the House and two members of the Senate, be appointed, who shall examine the paintings of Governor Reeder and John Brown now on exhibition in the Senate and House of Representatives, and inquire into the value and faithfulness and price of said paintings, and also as to whether other paintings of the subjects by other artists can be obtained, and their value, price and faithfulness, and report as speedily as possible.

That's all of the legislative record. If the committee was ever named it was never put into the record, and the Senate of the same session never received the resolution and never acted upon it.

Newspaper Tells of Artist.

Now began a search of the early files of the newspapers of 1881 and in the Topeka Capital of February 2 was found this:

As a work of art the painting of

John Brown recently hung in the House of Representatives is one of the few thoroughly good portrait paintings ever exhibited in Kansas.

Professor Wolfe is an artist whose works have been judged by many eminent men who are familiar with the best galleries of this country, and his pictures have been exhibited and thoroughly compared with the works of many of the most eminent portrait artists of the United States in the last five years. As long ago as 1860 Professor Wolfe painted a por-

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trait from sittings of the honored Abraham Lincoln, and a testimonial signed by O. M. Hatch, the secretary of state, Dubois, Ben Butler and other state officers, and endorsed by Lincoln himself, to the effect that it was the most truthful likeness of Mr. Lincoln they had ever seen, was given to the professor, and after Mr. Lincoln's death, Professor Wolfe received and filled thirty orders for copies of his portrait from the dead President's friends.

For sometime past the professor has been collecting material for a historical picture of early Kansas, and he has had experience also in this kind of artistic work, grouping of figures, etc. His panorama of Paradise Lost was designed wholly by himself, although the celebrated artist, Sontag, painted a portion of it. This was also true of his panorama of Pilgrim Progress, which has long been so favorably known. Among other celebrated persons whose portraits Mr. Wolfe has painted are Hon. Thomas Corwin, Dr. Lyman Beecher, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Dr. Stowe, Bishop McElvane and others from life sittings.

It is not often such an artist brings his pictures to a western market and the Capital hopes the Kansas legislature will give Professor Wolfe's portrait of John Brown conscientious and intelligent consideration.

It would be a good idea to appoint a committee of persons capable of judging such work from an artist's standpoint and comprising at least two or more of John Brown's most intimate friends and acquaintances who could judge correctly of the likeness. Then the legislature as a whole would know whether the picture was valuable to the state, both as an ornament and as a memento of the hero of Osawatimie. If it is, now is the time to secure it as the beginning of something worthy a place in our new statehouse.

The Wyandotte Gazette of February 4, 1881, mentioned the picture of John Brown and something about the artist and also urged that the solons then in session make arrangements to acquire the portrait.

But nothing appears to have been done by the Legislature of that time or by later Legislatures to acquire either of the pictures. It is believed both were left with the historical society in the hope that some future Legislature might make provision to buy them.

May Have Painted From Life.

It is possible Wolfe painted the Brown and Reeder pictures from life. He lived in Cincinnati and in 1845 was well known there, having painted portraits of many prominent citizens of that city and several historical and allegorical pictures which had received favorable comment.

The fact that J. C. Wolfe painted a portrait of Lincoln from life in 1860 is of some value, since he might have painted the John Brown portrait from life a year or two earlier. Brown was hanged December 2, 1859, and had been the forefront of the militant abolition movement the three preceding years.

There is no inkling anywhere in the Kansas records that this is the actual fact but neither is there evidence to the contrary. Since Wolfe was a contemporary of John Brown and painted the portraits of other prominent men of the period, there is reason to assume that Kansas actually owns an original portrait in oil of the anti-slavery leader.

The Kansas Historical society has the portrait of Governor Reeder, the first territorial governor, in his disguise and copies of that painting have been frequently used. The society also has a portrait of Alfred Gray, the founder of the state board of agriculture and its first secretary. None of these pictures bears a signature.

Kansas City, Sept 27, 1912

LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Number 791

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

June 5, 1944

FIFTY CONTEMPORARY LINCOLN PORTRAIT PAINTERS

One of the most fruitful fields for artistic expression in the realm of Lincolniana is that of the portrait painter. While it would be physically impossible to compile a complete list of all painters who have aspired to portray Abraham Lincoln, this bulletin does allow sufficient space for the listing of fifty of the most prominent ones who were contemporary with Lincoln's day. While many of them did not enjoy the privilege of scheduled sittings by the President, practically all of them were inspired to some extent by having seen him and having lived during his generation.

One may miss such names as Barry and Thomas Johnson, crayon artists, and Beale, Enzing-Muller, Ferris, Kaufman, who were primarily interested in Lincoln episodes rather than portraits. It is also necessary to omit several other contemporary artists whose works are somewhat unfamiliar. Only one painting for each artist is mentioned and briefly identified, and not always the most significant study is used as a selection from the artist's work. Some of the paintings may have changed hands since the Foundation files were assembled, but they were at one time in possession of the organizations or individuals noted.

The Lincoln National Life Foundation will greatly appreciate any information about paintings by contemporaries of Lincoln, or any corrections or additions that may be made to this initial compilation of Lincoln artists for the period under observation.

AMES, JOSEPH, 1816-1872.

From life, $\frac{3}{4}$ length, bearded, n. d. Faneuil Hall, Boston.

ATWOOD, JESSE.

From life, bust, bearded, 1861. J. W. Young, Chicago.

BAUMGRAS, PETER, 1827-1903.

From life, bust, bearded, 1865. Brown University.

BICKNELL, A. H., 1837-1915.

Standing, full length, bearded, 1864. State House at Boston.

BLAIR, MARION, 1824-1901.

Meserve 87, bust, bearded, n. d. Dr. Rodney D. Smith, Bloomington, Indiana.

BOWSER, D. B.

From M 85, bust, bearded, 1866. Lincoln National Life Foundation.

BRADISH, ALVAH, ?-1901.

Bust, bearded, 1867. John D. Denison, Des Moines, Iowa.

BROWN, J. HENRY, 1818-(1889).

From life, bust, beardless, 1860. Original in possession of Lincoln family.

CARPENTER, F. B., 1830-1900.

From life, bust, bearded, 1864. Union League Club, New York.

CHAPPEL, ALONZO.

Meserve 38, seated, bearded, 1862. He did famous deathbed scene.

COGSWELL, WILLIAM, 1819-1903.

Full length, bearded, 1864. White House, Washington, D. C.

CONANT, ALBAN, 1821-1915.

From life, bust, beardless, 1860. Phillips Manor House, Yonkers, New York.

COOPER, GEORGE, 1810-1878.

From life, M 87, bust, bearded, 1865. A. E. Rueff, of Brooklyn, New York.

COURTER, FRANKLIN C., 1856-

Seated, full length, bearded. Once in possession of Andrew W. Mellon.

COX, JACOB, 1828-?

Bust, bearded, 1865. Herron Art Institute, Indianapolis, Indiana.

CROASDALE, ELIZABETH, ?-1871.

From life, bust, bearded, 1863. Arthur Edwin Bye, Holicon, Pa.

CROSS, HENRY H., 1836-1861.

From life, bust, beardless, 1861. Arthur Bahr, Jr., Evanston, Illinois.

DILLE, J. H., 1832-?

Meserve 6, bust, beardless, 1860. Court House, Goshen, Indiana.

DODGE, J. N.

Meserve 88, bust, bearded, 1865.

EATON, WYATT, 1849-?

Meserve 57, bust, bearded, 1863.

EWING, ROBERT F., 1841-1928.

From life, bust, bearded.

HEALY, G. P. A., 1813-1894.

From life sketches, seated, bearded, 1866. Newberry Library, Chicago.

HICKS, THOMAS, 1823-1890.

From life, bust, beardless, 1860. Daniel W. Patterson.

HUNT, WILLIAM, 1824-1879.

Meserve 94, bust, bearded, 1866. John G. Winant.

HUNTINGTON, DANIEL, 1816-1906.

From life, seated, $\frac{3}{4}$ length, bearded, 1865. Union League Club, New York.

JARVIS, CHARLES, 1821-1868. From

life, M 98, bust, bearded, 1865. Harry McNeil Bland, New York.

JOHNSON, EASTMAN, 1824-1906.

Episode, full length, seated, youth. University of Michigan.

LAMBDIN, JAMES READ, 1807-1889.

From life, bust, bearded, 1863. Oliver R. Barrett, Chicago.

LITTLEFIELD, JOHN H., 1835-

Memory, bust, bearded, 1868. Famous engraving by Gugler made from this work.

LUPTON, JOHN.

Meserve 87, bust, bearded, 1866. Once in possession of Thomas W. Eckert.

MARCHANT, E. D., 1806-1887.

From life, seated, $\frac{3}{4}$ length, 1863. Union League of Philadelphia.

MARSCHALL, NICOLA, 1829-1917.

Meserve 42, bearded, $\frac{1}{2}$ length, 1875. Knights of Columbus, Louisville.

MARSHALL, WILLIAM E., 1837-

Bust, bearded, 1866. New York Historical Society.

MATHEWS, W. T., 1905-

From life, bust, bearded, 1865. Oliver R. Barrett, Chicago.

NAST, THOMAS, 1840-1903.

Meserve 85, seated, full length, beard. Once owned by Wm. F. E. Gurley, Chicago.

NICKUM, CHARLES W., ?-1913.

From life, M 19, bust, smooth face, (1859?). Dayton (Ohio) Public Museum.

READ, THOMAS B., 1822-1872.

Meserve 87, short bust, bearded, 1865. Once in the Gunther Collection, Chicago.

SANGSTER, JAMES.

Meserve 85, bust, bearded, 1865. University of Michigan.

SILSBEE.

From life, bust, bearded, 1864. Once in possession of H. T. Sperry, Hartford.

SMITH, XANTHUS, 1839-

Meserve 27, bust, beardless. Union League Club, Philadelphia.

STORY, GEORGE H., 1834-1923.

From life sketch, bust, bearded, 1916. Illinois State Historical Society.

SULLY, THOMAS, 1783-1872.

Brady 85, bust, bearded, 1862. Schwartz Galleries, New York.

THORP, FREEMAN, 1844-1922.

Meserve 59, bust, bearded, 1920. Senate corridor of Capitol, Washington.

TRAVERS, N. F. K., 1828-1882.

From life, full length, bearded, 1865. Percy A. Rockefeller Estate.

TWITCHELL, ASA W., 1820-1904.

Meserve 85, $\frac{3}{4}$ length, bearded, 1865. Mrs. Cornelius J. Sullivan, New York.

WAUGH, SAMUEL B., 1814-1885.

From life, bust, bearded, 1864. Wharton Sinkler, Elkins Park, Pa.

WILLARD, WILLIAM.

From life, M 84, bust, bearded, 1864. Oscar S. Strauss.

WILSON, MATTHEW, 1814-1892.

From life, Meserve 97, bust, bearded, 1865. Painted for Gideon Welles, also for Joshua Speed. Latter in possession of Speed Family, Louisville, Kentucky.

WOLFE, J. C.

From life, bust, smooth face, 1860. Said to have been thirty copies of this painting.

WRIGHT, GEORGE F., 1830-1880.

From life, bust, beardless, 1860. University of Chicago.



Ralph Helsel

Retired Minister of the Free Methodist Church



August 19, 1993

Lincoln Library
1300 S. Clinton
Ft. Wayne, Ind. 46801
Att: Ruth Cook

Dear Ms. Cook:

I am sending you all the information I have on J. C. Wolfe. This also details my search for the missing portrait of Lincoln.

Have you discovered any more about the source for listing the portrait of Lincoln by Wolfe in LINCOLN LORE magazine as one of the fifty best? *yes*

I am at the end of my list of places to search for this portrait. Someone suggested I write to the White House. *no* Does that seem to be a reasonable place to go?

I did so enjoy the phone conversations with you several months ago. It seemed to me that this portrait captured your imagination and interest. If you find any more information about this portrait, I will be very grateful. Since it does appear this was Lincoln's favorite, it is a shame that at least one of the copies of it is not in a museum somewhere.

Sincerely

Ralph Helsel

Ralph Helsel

*Photocopied
full file sent
11/14/93
R.H.*

3311 WEST 8TH STREET
WICHITA, KANSAS 67203
PHONE 316-943-9988



Liliuokalani, 1838-1917
Hawaiian ruler
Menzies Dickson, c. 1840-1891
Photograph, albumen silver print,
12.7 x 9.1 cm. (5 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 3 $\frac{3}{16}$ in.),
c. 1891
NPG.80.320
*Gift of the Bernice Pauahi Bishop
Museum*



Liliuokalani, 1838-1917
Hawaiian ruler
Harris and Ewing studio, active
1905-1977
Photograph, gelatin silver print, 37.5
x 28.6 cm. (14 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.), c. 1908
NPG.84.250
Gift of Aileen Conkey



Limón, José, 1908-1972
Dancer
Philip Grausman, 1935-
Bronze, 33.9 cm. (13 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.), 1969
NPG.75.31
Gift of an anonymous donor



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United
States
Joseph Edward Baker, 1835-1914,
after Charles A. Barry
J. H. Bufford lithography company
Lithograph on rice paper, 57.7 x 50.1
cm. (22 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 19 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.), 1860
NPG.83.182



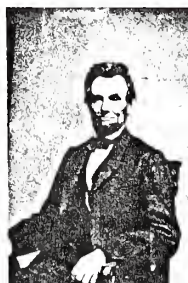
Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United
States
Anthony Berger, ?-?
Photograph, albumen silver print,
32.8 x 24.1 cm. (12 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.),
1864
NPG.80.22



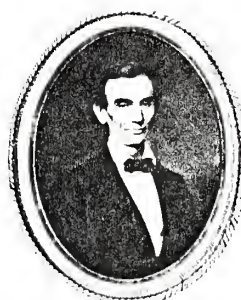
Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United
States
Anthony Berger, ?-?, at the Mathew
Brady studio
Photograph, albumen silver print,
18.9 x 13.5 cm. (7 $\frac{7}{16}$ x 5 $\frac{5}{16}$ in.),
1864
NPG.83.142



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United
States
C. Bornemann, ?-?, after photograph
by Mathew Brady
Lemercier lithography company
Hand-colored lithograph with
tintstone, 25.9 x 21 cm. (10 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 8 $\frac{1}{4}$
in.), not dated
NPG.78.296



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United
States
Mathew Brady, 1823-1896
Photograph, albumen silver print,
8.3 x 5.3 cm. (3 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 2 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.), 1864
NPG.79.149



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United
States
John Henry Brown, 1819-1891
Watercolor on ivory, 14 x 11.4 cm.
(5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.), 1860
NPG.75.11



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United
States
J. H. Bufford lithography company,
active 1835-1890, after photograph
attributed to Christopher S.
German
Lithograph, 20.7 x 15.7 cm. (8 $\frac{1}{8}$ x
6 $\frac{3}{16}$ in.), 1860
Music sheet title page: "Inauguration
Grand March"
NPG.84.81



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
John Chester Buttre, 1821-1893, after photograph
Engraving, 65.3 x 47.4 cm. (18 $\frac{5}{16}$ x 25 $\frac{1}{16}$ in.), c. 1860-1861
NPG.79.160



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Currier and Ives lithography company, active 1857-1907, after photograph by Mathew Brady
Hand-colored lithograph, 31.1 x 22.8 cm. (12 $\frac{3}{16}$ x 9 in.), 1860
NPG.83.219



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
John Chester Buttre, 1821-1893, and William Momberger, 1829-?, after photograph by Anthony Berger
Engraving, 33.6 x 25.1 cm. (13 $\frac{3}{16}$ x 9 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.), c. 1865
NPG.83.243



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Currier and Ives lithography company, active 1857-1907, after photograph by Mathew Brady
Lithograph, 37.4 x 30 cm. (14 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 11 $\frac{3}{16}$ in.), 1860
NPG.83.220



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Carquillat, 1802/3-1884, after Allardet, after photograph by Anthony Berger
Silk, 20 x 14 cm. (7 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.), 1876
NPG.83.228



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Currier and Ives lithography company, active 1857-1907, after photograph by Samuel M. Fassett
Lithograph, 29.5 x 24 cm. (11 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{7}{16}$ in.), 1860-1861
NPG.83.222



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Currier and Ives lithography company, active 1857-1907, after Brady studio
Lithograph, 38 x 29 cm. (24 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.), c. 1860-1861
NPG.79.186



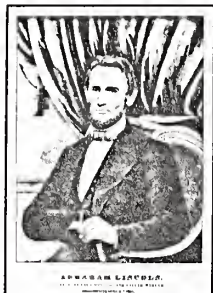
Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Currier and Ives lithography company, active 1857-1907, after photograph by Mathew Brady
Lithograph, 30.3 x 21.2 cm. (11 $\frac{15}{16}$ x 8 $\frac{5}{16}$ in.), 1860-1861
NPG.83.223



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Currier and Ives lithography company, active 1857-1907, after photograph by Mathew Brady
Lithograph, 24.2 x 18.5 cm. (9 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.), 1860
NPG.80.51



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Currier and Ives lithography company, active 1857-1907, after photograph by Anthony Berger
Lithograph, 30.1 x 22.3 cm. (11 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 8 $\frac{3}{16}$ in.), c. 1864-1865
NPG.83.224



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Currier and Ives lithography company, active 1857-1907, after photograph
Lithograph, 34.5 x 24.4 cm. (13 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{16}$ in.), 1865
NPG.83.226



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Samuel M. Fassett, active 1855-1875
Photograph, salt print, 18.4 x 13.3 cm. (7 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.), 1859
NPG.77.265



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Currier and Ives lithography company, active 1857-1907, after photograph by Anthony Berger
Lithograph, 25.9 x 22.7 cm. (10 $\frac{3}{16}$ x 8 $\frac{15}{16}$ in.), c. 1865
NPG.83.227



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Fetter's picture gallery, ?-?, after c. 1858 photograph attributed to Christopher S. German
Ambrotype, 6.3 x 5.1 cm. (2 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 2 in.), c. 1860
NPG.81.25



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Thomas Doney, active c. 1844-1870s, after photograph by Alexander Hesler
Mezzotint, 20.3 x 15.1 cm. (8 x 5 $\frac{15}{16}$ in.), 1860
NPG.83.215



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Alexander Gardner, 1821-1882
Photograph, albumen silver print, 8.6 x 5.3 cm. (3 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 2 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.), 1861
NPG.79.150



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Ehrgott and Forbriger lithography company, active 1858-1869, after Christopher S. German
Hand-colored lithograph, 34.2 x 23.8 cm. (13 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 9 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.), c. 1861-1862
NPG.81.35



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Alexander Gardner, 1821-1882
Wet-collodion photographic negative, 59 x 42.2 cm. (20 x 17 in.), 1863
NPG.83.129
Gift of the James Smithsonian Society, CBS Television Network, and James Macatee



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Ensign, Bridgman, and Fanning, active 1854-1868, after Mathew Brady
Hand-colored wood engraving, 35.8 x 22.8 cm. (14 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 8 $\frac{15}{16}$ in.), c. 1860
NPG.81.50
Gift of Dr. Frank Stanton



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Leopold Grozelier, 1830-1865, after Thomas Hicks
J. H. Bufford lithography company
Lithograph, 55.5 x 40.5 cm. (21 x 16 in.), 1860
NPG.80.44



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Frederick W. Halpin, 1805-1880, after Francis Bicknell Carpenter
Stipple and line engraving, 42.8 x 32.5 cm. (16 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 12 $\frac{1}{16}$ in.), 1866
NPG.72.96
Gift of Mrs. Robert R. McCormick



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
E. B. and E. C. Kellogg lithography company, active c. 1842-1867, after ambrotype attributed to William Marsh
Hand-colored lithograph, 30.2 x 21.9 cm. (11 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 8 $\frac{5}{8}$ in.), 1860-1861
NPG.83.217



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
E. B. and E. C. Kellogg lithography company, active c. 1842-1867, after photograph by Alexander Hesler
Hand-colored lithograph, 28.6 x 21.7 cm. (11 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.), 1860-1861
NPG.83.218



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
E. B. and E. C. Kellogg lithography company, active c. 1842-1867, after photograph by Alexander Gardner
Hand-colored lithograph, 30.2 x 21.8 cm. (11 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 8 $\frac{5}{8}$ in.), c. 1861-1862
NPG.83.221



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Charles Wesley Jarvis, 1812-1868
Oil on canvas, 76.1 x 67.9 cm. (29 $\frac{15}{16}$ x 26 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.), 1861
NPG.78.272
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Arpad



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Albert Kidder, active 1863-1869, after Mathew Brady
Charles Shober lithography company
Lithograph, 8.3 x 7.7 cm. (3 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 3 in.), 1864
NPG.81.47
Gift of Marvin Sadik



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
E. B. and E. C. Kellogg lithography company, active c. 1842-1867, after photograph by Mathew Brady
Hand-colored lithograph, 28.4 x 20.9 cm. (11 $\frac{3}{16}$ x 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.), 1860
NPG.83.216



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Kimmel and Forster engraving and lithography company, active 1865-1866, after photograph by Mathew Brady
Hand-colored lithograph, 20.8 x 16.2 cm. (8 $\frac{3}{16}$ x 6 $\frac{1}{16}$ in.), c. 1865
NPG.80.40





Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Thomas Le Mere, ?-?, at the Mathew Brady studio
Photograph, albumen silver print, 8.1 x 5.3 cm. (3 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 2 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.), 1863
NPG.79.151



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
William Edgar Marshall, 1837-1906, after painting by William Edgar Marshall, after photograph
Engraving, 52.9 x 40.6 cm. (20 $\frac{3}{16}$ x 16 $\frac{1}{16}$ in.), 1866
NPG.79.204



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
William Roberts, c. 1829-?, after photograph by Mathew Brady
Wood engraving with one tint, 50.1 x 38.2 cm. (19 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 15 in.), 1864
NPG.83.229



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
John Sartain, 1808-1897, after photograph by Wenderoth and Taylor
Mezzotint, second state of Martin Van Buren plate (NPG.79.75), 51.4 x 35.2 cm. (20 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.), 1864-1865
NPG.79.73



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
William Judkins Thomson, ?-?
Ambrotype, 13.8 x 10.7 cm. (5 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 4 $\frac{1}{16}$ in.), 1858
NPG.82.52



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Clark Mills, 1815-1883
Plaster life mask, 29.2 cm. (11 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.), cast after 1865 original
NPG.71.26
Transfer from the National Museum of American History



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Adalbert John Volck ("V. Blada"), 1828-1912, after John Roy Robertson
Etching, 17 x 11.8 cm. (6 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 4 $\frac{5}{8}$ in.), 1861
From the series "Great American Tragedians, Comedians, Clowns and Rope Dancers in Their Favorite Characters"
NPG.78.31



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
William H. Pratt, active c. 1858-c. 1888, after photograph by Anthony Berger
A. Hageboeck lithography company
Lithograph, 31.3 x 22.9 cm. (12 $\frac{3}{16}$ x 9 in.), 1865
NPG.84.203



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Leonard Wells Volk, 1828-1895
Plaster life mask, 22.2 cm. (8 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.), cast after 1860 bronze original
NPG.71.24
Transfer from the National Museum of American History





Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Leonard Wells Volk, 1828-1895
Plaster, 66 cm. (26 in.), 1860
NPG.78.215



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Henry F. Warren, ?-?
Photograph, albumen silver print,
33.8 x 25.8 cm. (13 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 10 $\frac{1}{16}$ in.),
1865
NPG.82.141



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Frederick A. Wenderoth, c. 1814-1884, and William Curtis Taylor, active 1863-1890; studio active 1863-1864
Photograph, albumen silver print,
6.5 x 5.3 cm. (2 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 2 $\frac{1}{16}$ in.), 1864
NPG.80.296



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Henry Whateley, active c. 1859-1861, after photograph by Samuel M. Fassett
Thomas Sinclair lithography company
Lithograph with tintstone, 31.6 x 24.5 cm. (12 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 9 $\frac{5}{8}$ in.), c. 1859-1860
Music sheet title page: "Lincoln Quick Step"
NPG.80.46



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
William Willard, 1819-1904
Oil on canvas, 61 x 45.5 cm. (24 x 18 in.), 1864
NPG.76.36
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. David A. Morse



Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Unidentified photographer, after 1857 photograph by Alexander Hesler
Photograph, albumen silver print,
2.8 x 2 cm. (1 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 1 $\frac{3}{16}$ in.), c. 1860
NPG.80.249

MEMENTO MORI.



Born, . . . Feb. 12, 1809
Assassinated, April 15th, 1865.

Most strict in his observance of what was Right—most rigid in his adherence to Justice.

Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
Sixteenth President of the United States
Unidentified artist, after photograph by Anthony Berger
Woodcut, 32 x 23.2 cm. (12 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.), 1865
NPG.83.236



Lincoln, Benjamin, 1733-1810
Revolutionary general
John Rubens Smith, 1775-1849, after Henry Sargent
Mezzotint, 45 x 35 cm. (17 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.), 1811
NPG.77.41



Lind, Jenny, 1820-1887
Singer
Napolcon Sarony, 1821-1896, after daguerreotype by Marcus Aurelius Root and Samuel Root
Lithograph with tintstone, 26.9 x 20.4 cm. (10 $\frac{9}{16}$ x 8 in.), 1850
NPG.81.95



Lindbergh, Charles Augustus, 1902-1974
Aviator
Jo Davidson, 1883-1952
Bronze, 38.1 cm. (15 in.), 1939
NPG.68.10

Ralph Helsel
3311 W. 8th
Wichita, Ks. 67203

J. C. WOLFE

J. C. Wolfe was the brother of Mary Wolfe, the wife of John Helsel. Their father, Samuel, was a cousin of General James Wolfe who fought at Quebec. J. C. Wolfe came to America in about 1839, settling in Ohio. John Wolfe was an artist, and had a studio at the corner of 8th and Main in Cincinnati.

His portrait of John Brown was declared as "one of the few thoroughly good portrait paintings ever exhibited in Kansas." This is from the Wyandotte Gazette of Feb. 4, 1881. The Kansas legislature attempted to purchase the painting after it was hung in the capitol in about 1881. Apparently they were not successful, and the painting was returned to his widow in 1898. She lived at that time at the Corner of 3rd and Washington Sts. Kansas City, Ks. Later the State did acquire it, and now it is in the archives in Kansas State Historical Society, 120 W. 10th, Topeka, Ks. 66612-1291. Black and white copies of this may be obtained from that source. The picture of John Brown hung in the governors office as late as 1957.

In 1860, J. C. Wolfe painted, from sittings, Abraham Lincoln. A testimonial signed by D. M. Hatch, the secretary of state, Dubois, Ben Butler and other state officers stated that this was the most truthful likeness of Lincoln ever painted. They claimed they had the endorsement of Lincoln himself to that effect. That testimonial was given to Prof. Wolfe after Lincoln's death.

After Lincoln's death thirty of Lincoln's friends commissioned paintings of Lincoln from J. C. Wolfe. These he painted and delivered to those who ordered them.

He also painted portraits of Dr. Lyman Beecher, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Dr. Stowe, Bishop McIlvane, Hon. Thomas Corwin and others.

He was hired to paint Milton's Paradise Lost and Regained. This painting was entirely designed by J. C. Wolfe, though a portion of it was painted by an artist by the name of William Sontag. This painting was commissioned by P. T. Barnum and was on exhibited for the admission price of .25 in about 1850.

Prof. Wolfe taught art at a Female Academy at Mount Healthy, probably near Cincinnati. He also painted "Joseph and Potiphar's wife." That picture at one time hung in the

St. Charles Exchange in Cincinnati.

I have written to the
Lincoln Home National Historical Site in Springfield,
Ill.
The Cincinnati Art Museum
The New York Historical Society's Dictionary of Artists
in America,
Smithsonian National Museum of Art.
National Portrait Gallery
Metropolitan Museum of Art
The Dayton Art Institute.
None of these could locate that portrait.

I have also written to the Barnum Museum, in Sarasota,
Fl., and to the Abraham Lincoln Book Store in Chicago, but
have not heard from either of them, and doubt now that I
will.

file

Nov. 21, 1993

The Lincoln Museum
1300 S. Clinton St.
Box 1110
Fort Wayne, Ind. 46801
Att: Ruth Cook

Dear Ms. Cook:

I thank you for the information you sent on J. C. Wolfe. It was interesting to see how much detective work it took to determine that he had painted the John Brown portrait.

Since he did not sign his works, the hope of finding one of the Lincoln portraits would seem to be quite remote. I have appreciated all your effort to help me find one. If you locate anything in the future, I shall be grateful to learn about it.

Thanks again for your interest and effort in this search.

Sincerely

Ralph Helsel

Ralph Helsel
3311 W. 8th
Wichita, Ks. 67203-4804

1.

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American Heritage Magazine

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History Now

Lincoln heard and seen

A crucial letter and life portrait finally surface

by Harold Holzer

Just when it seemed we'd heard—and seen—everything there is to know about one of America's most prolific and portrayed Presidents, two vital, long-lost relics from his past, one verbal and one visual, have unexpectedly surfaced.

For years scholars have known that Lincoln penned some sort of letter in the fall of 1859 to the Ohio orator and Republican senator Thomas Corwin. Two surviving Corwin letters to Lincoln neatly bracket, and indisputably attest to, the missing communication. In the first, Corwin chides Lincoln for allegedly saying in a Cincinnati speech that a moderate Republican presidential candidate would lose Illinois by 50,000 votes in 1860. In the second, written nearly a month later, Corwin notes, "I have red [received] your explanation," adding: "Six months hence we shall see more clearly what at this time must remain only in conjecture."

But what had Lincoln written to Corwin in between? All that the Library of Congress's Abraham Lincoln Papers Web site offered was the notation "The 'explanation' referred to has not been located."

Now it has. About a year ago the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop in Chicago announced that it had been brought a three-page handwritten "Confidential" note, long quietly treasured by Corwin's descendants. Undeniably Lincoln's, it offers some of the strongest language he ever used to defend his party's opposition to slavery, warning:

"Drop that issue, and they [voters] have no motive to remain, and will not remain, with us. It is idiotic to think otherwise. Do you understand me as saying Illinois must have an extreme antislavery candidate? I do not so mean. We must have, though, a man who recognizes that Slavery issue as being the living issue of the day; who does not hesitate to declare slavery a wrong, nor to deal with it as such; who believes in the power, and duty of Congress to prevent the spread of it."

One can search high and low in the Lincoln corpus for another use of the word *idiotic*—or for more electric proof that on the cusp of his nomination to the Presidency he was as strongly committed as ever to keeping slavery at the center of American political discourse until it could be eradicated. Unwilling to focus on safer subjects "upon which the old Whig party was beat out of existence"—"tariff, extravagances, live oak contracts, and the like," he mocks—Lincoln reiterates that there is only one subject worth discussing: "that Slavery issue."

After he won the nomination the next year, painters and sculptors descended on his hometown to create depictions of the little-known dark-horse candidate. Lincoln welcomed the artists to his offices in the Springfield statehouse, allowing them to sketch or model him as he opened his daily mail. Most of them had difficulty. Accustomed to sitters who posed in frozen stillness, and frustrated by Lincoln's requirement that they observe him "on the jump," several importuned him to sit for local photographers to produce models they could work from at their ease.

The best of the resulting campaign paintings quickly inspired mass-produced engravings and lithographs. The worst were just as quickly forgotten. One, however, by an artist named J. C. Wolfe seemed to vanish altogether despite its reputed excellence.



Now this mystery, too, has been solved. The painting turned up last year in a Chicago suburb, hanging in the home of the descendants of a Springfield landlord in whose building Wolfe likely lodged and worked. Family lore holds that the artist had no money to pay his rent when he left town and handed over the Lincoln picture to satisfy his debts.

The spirited Wolfe portrait, well drafted and in perfect condition, turns out to bear close resemblance to an odd, seldom reproduced Lincoln photograph long attributed by experts to one Joseph Hill of Springfield in that same month of June 1860. The Hill photo was clearly commissioned by Wolfe to serve him as a crutch for capturing Lincoln's likeness. Eerily, the photo still bears the outlined impression of the oval mat that once framed it, matching almost precisely the oval painting that Wolfe subsequently crafted in oil.

We know little of what happened thereafter to Wolfe, an itinerant who made his living going from city to city and painting prominent citizens. But Corwin, so powerfully rebuked by Lincoln in 1859, emerged that year as what one might describe as a major historical footnote. Both he and Lincoln received invitations, around the same time they exchanged letters, from the Young Men's Central Republican Union of New York, bidding that they come east to lecture. Corwin promptly accepted and went on to deliver a speech at Brooklyn's Plymouth Church. Lincoln hesitated, negotiated, postponed, and finally agreed to come too. But by the time he arrived in New York,

the church's lecture series had ended, and he was compelled to give his speech instead at a different venue: Cooper Union. There, on February 27, 1860, he gave the widely reported speech that was perhaps the biggest single factor in making him President.

Wolfe, J.C.

DRAWER 19A

Art. 515-W

